

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MONROV 02888 191732Z

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9022
INFO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

S E C R E T MONROVIA 2888

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1
TAGS: SHUM, PEPR, GV, LI
SUBJECT: LIBERIAN AND PAPAL NUMCIO INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF
ARCHBISHOP TCHIDIMBO

REF: CONAKRY 0763

1. ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS CARROLL, PAPAL NUNCIO IN LIBERIA,
INFORMED AMBASSADOR CARTER, FOLLOWING CARROLL'S RETURN
FROM CONAKRY, THAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE
INTERVENTIONS FOR RELEASE OF ARCHBISHOP TCHIDIMBO AND
THAT IT APPEARED LIKELY THAT TCHIDIMBO WOULD BE
RELEASED WITHIN A WEEK OR SO. ON APRIL 19, BEFORE
RECEIPT OF REFTEL, THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR WAS GIVEN

FURTHER DETAILS BY CARROLL. CARROLL SAID THAT TOURE
HAD DEMANDED THAT TCHIDIMBO RESIGN. THE VATICAN
HAD AGREED ON CONDITION THAT TCHIDIMBO BE ALLOWED
TO RESIGN AFTER RELEASE AND IN LIBERIA. AFTER
TOURE REFUSED THIS CONDITION, IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT
TCHIDIMBO BE PERMITTED TO RESIGN AT THE LIBERIAN
EMBASSY IN CONAKRY. CARROLL ANTICIPATES THAT THIS
ARRANGEMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MONROV 02888 191732Z

2. CARROLL DESCRIBED A MEETING WITH TOURE IN WHICH
THE LATTER DELEVERED A TIRADE AGAINST TCHIDIMBO
FOR THIS ALLEGED INVOLVEMTN IN THE 1970 ATTACK. AT THE
END OF THE TIRADE, TOURE ANNOUNCED ABRUPTLY THAT
CARROLL AND FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS WOULD BE PERMITTED
FORTHWITH TO VISIT WITH TCHIDIMBO. CARROLL DESCRIBED
TCHIDIMBO AS DRESSED WELL, APPARENTLY HEALTHY AND IN

GOOD SPIRITS.

3. CARROLL BELIEVES THAT TOURE WANTS TO RELEASE TCHIDIMBO BUT IN AFRICAN FASHION NEEDS TO FINDS A FACE-SAVING WAY TO DO SO. HE THUS CONTINUES HIS OUTBURSTS AGAINST TCHIDIMBO'S ALLEGED PERfidY BUT AT THE SAME TIME IS PREPARED TO MAKE A MAGANIMOUS GESTURE IN RESPONSE TO THE PLEADINGS OF OTHERS. PART OF TOURE'S DEEP EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE TCHIDIMBO CASE ARISES, ACCORDING TO CARROLL, FROM THE FACT THAT HE AND TCHIDIMBO HAD BEEN EXTREMELY CLOSE FRIENDS. WHEN TOURE LEARNED OF TCHIDIMBO'S ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT WITH THE 1970 INVASION, HE THUS WAS THAT MUCH MORE BITTER.

4. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY SECONDS CONAKRY'S URGING THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN REMAIN TIGHTLY HELD WITH REGARD BOTH TO SUBSTANCE AND SOURCES.
CARTER

SECRET

NNN

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